

Minutes  
Community Voices/Budget Choices Facilitation Committee  
June 26, 2008

The committee met at the First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m.

Alison Donta-Venman, Martha Hanner, Jerry Jolly, Irv Rhodes, Bob Saul, and Richard Spurgin were present from the committee, as was Andrew Steinberg, Budget Coordinating Group liaison to the committee and John Musante (Assistant Town Manager and Finance Director).

Agenda:

1. Review discussion from June 12 with Alisa Brewer and June 19 with Rod Wright
2. Identify the work that needs to be done by the committee and determine what can be assigned to subcommittees
3. Create subcommittees (motion) and assign members to subcommittees
4. Receive presentation of scenarios and projections, if available
5. Develop (or assign to subcommittee) job description for committee leadership
6. Scheduling for July
7. Adopt minutes of prior meetings

The discussion did not proceed in the order of the agenda or address all items.

5. Rhodes urged the committee to elect a chair to preserve credibility. Donta-Venman said that transparency is an essential committee value and that we should not elect a chair without notice and with so many people absent. The committee developed a job description for the chair position, which Donta-Venman agreed to record and circulate to the committee, with notice that the chair will be elected at the next meeting. A copy of that memo is attached to these minutes to be included as part of the record of this meeting.

Steinberg reported that several committee members were hesitant to be chair, due to the amount of work, unless there are co-chairs. The group discussed whether there should be a co-chair arrangement. Rhodes moved that the committee agree that the best arrangement is to have co-chairs. The motion was seconded by Jolly. No one opposed the concept of co-chairs, but some spoke to the benefit to make that decision at the next meeting when members can indicate their interest in being chair, or co-chair. The motion did not pass on a vote of three in favor and three against.

2 and 3. The committee discussed the subcommittees that had been discussed on at the June 12 meeting, and the purpose for each one:

1. data analysis – to summarize information from the data that will be available from the scenarios and financial projections in order to develop a presentation of options for consideration in the community process
2. presentation – to develop a presentation of the options and the information developed by the data analysis group

3. outreach and public engagement – to develop and oversee the public process to discuss the options and information as presented
4. media, to oversee communications from the committee including working with Town IT staff to develop web presence
5. coordination, to continue to develop and monitor the work plan and time line

Rhodes moved to adopt the five subcommittees, as described. There were several seconds and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Musante shared information about the progress of the library, schools and town on the development of scenarios and the financial projections. He gave a brief preview of the projections and noted that the Finance Committee agreed that we might need to consider a scenario of reduced funding, particularly if voters adopt an initiative to abolish the income tax. There were questions and discussion. Steinberg reminded the committee that some services are largely or entirely fee supported, including Enterprise Funds, and that some revenue is for specific purposes.

6. There will be no meeting on July 3. The next meeting will be on July 10.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Andrew Steinberg, acting clerk

**From:** Alison Donta [mailto:adonta@mtholyoke.edu]

**Sent:** Thursday, June 26, 2008 12:06 PM

**To:** Andrew Steinberg; musantej@amherstma.gov; bob.saul@gmo.com; gawles@verizon.net; isaacbenezra@yahoo.com; jerryjolly@comcast.net; jlansberry@comcast.net; kvorwerk@psych.umass.edu; msh\_jwh@yahoo.com; rhodesamherst@aol.com; RSPURGIN@CLARKU.EDU

**Subject:** FCC Chair

Hi All...

I am writing to summarize today's organizational discussion regarding the Chair of our committee so that everyone is on the same page and we can move this issue forward. Present at today's meeting were myself, Irv, Rich, Martha, Jerry, and Bob (plus Andy and John). We were able to agree on the job description for the Chair and to agree that we would make election of the Chair the first item on our agenda at our next meeting, July 10th.

The job description is as follows:

--Set agenda for meetings

--Run meetings

--Coordinate with John (or other staff members) to make sure we have a meeting location and other logistics (i.e. will we need projection capability, conference call, etc)

--Make sure minutes are taken at each meeting and completed before the next meeting.

The Chair will not serve as the minute-taker; there was a preliminary agreement that minute-taking could be rotating among all other members.

--Serve as primary contact between our committee and Town staff, representatives from the library and school.

--Serve as the primary internal contact for committee members.

--Serve as the primary public presence (i.e. the person to whom the press would go for quotes, etc) [Note: not to be confused with the Media Subcommittee]

--Coordinate subcommittee work (direct assignment of work, follow up with subcommittees to make sure work is getting done, etc)

--Responsible for the production of the final report, in whatever format that may take

There was a lengthy discussion about Chair versus Co-chairs with some agreement that it might be a good idea to have Co-chairs but a single-Chair model could also work.

We will vote on Chair (or Co-Chair as the case may be) as the first agenda item at our next meeting. For those of you who will not be able to make it, conference call capability will be possible, and anyone participating via conference call will be allowed to vote. John will be setting this up and will be emailing everyone with contact information. In the mean time, if you would like to be considered for Chair, you can email Andy with this information. Particularly those of you who will not be at the next meeting but who would like to be considered for the position. Please email John by July 7th so it can be included in the vote. It will also be possible to submit nominations before the vote on July 10th.

If any of this is not clear, please feel free to ask me for clarification.

...Alison